

**Remarks**

Claims 1-41 are pending in the application. Claims 2-3, and 36-37 have been canceled. Claims 1, 4-5, 35 and 40 have been amended. Support for the amendment can be found throughout the Specification, and in particular on page 11, line 30 to page 12, line 21, and Figs. 1-2, and 4.

**§ 102 Rejections**

Claims 1-16, 21-23, and 35-41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,141,790 (Calhoun). The Office Action relies on Figure 7 of Calhoun to disclose outwardly extending protrusions “as the area of the liner located between the embossed depressions” that “penetrate the adhesive layer in the areas between the elements (75) of the adhesive layer” and “the adhesive does not contact the land or the depressed area. . .”

Applicants have amended Claims 1, 4-5, and 35 to recite that the protrusions penetrate the adhesive layer to make substantial contact with the backing layer. “Penetrate” is defined as “make a way in or through something.” *American Heritage Dictionary* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed. 2000) p.1299. Calhoun fails to disclose protrusions on the release liner layer that reduce the contact area between the release liner layer and adhesive layer by penetrating through the adhesive layer to substantially contact the backing layer associated with the adhesive layer.

Accordingly, Calhoun fails to disclose each and every element of claims 1-16, 21-23, and 35-41. MPEP § 2131. Applicants respectfully submit that the 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) rejection should be withdrawn.

**§ 103 Rejections**

Claims 1-41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious in light of Calhoun. For the reasons stated above and discussed under the 102(b) rejection, the Calhoun reference cannot be modified to render claims 1-41 obvious under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a). The Office Action further fails to provide a teaching or suggestion to modify Calhoun to provide the dimensions of post shape, aspect ratio, protrusion density, etc. disclosed in claims 1-41 to effect a reduction in contact area. Even considering the areas between “depressions” to be protrusions, Calhoun provides no teaching to modify

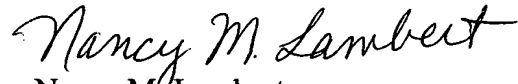
the area size to reduce contact area or penetrate the adhesive layer. Rather, Calhoun teaches away by specifying the size and shape of the depressions to protect the "plurality of spaced clumps of particles."

Consequently, the rejection of claims 1-41 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) has been overcome. Withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

**Conclusion**

In view of the above, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the application is requested with allowance of claims 1-41 solicited at an early date.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy M. Lambert  
Registration No. 44,856  
Attorney for Applicants

NML:jlh/57384US002 RCE and Response 3-19-04  
Office of Intellectual Property Counsel  
3M Innovative Properties Company  
P.O. Box 33427  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55133-3427  
(651) 733-2180  
Facsimile: (651) 736-3833

Dated: March 19, 2004